

Not in Lande
" " Casey

Henry Russell

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*from his friend
the Editor.*

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH

OF

MONTREAL,

TPL 1725

Morgan p 286

Gagnon II, 1470

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ON THURSDAY, THE 9th OF AUGUST, 1832.

AT THE

VISITATION

OF THE HONORABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF QUEBEC,

BY THE VENERABLE G. J. MOUNTAIN, D. D. ARCHDEACON OF QUEBEC,
RECTOR OF THE PARISH OF QUEBEC AND EXAMINING
CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP
OF QUEBEC.

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1833.

*** A peculiar pressure of occupation must be the apology of the Author, to his brethren of the Clergy who were present at the delivery of this sermon, for the length of time which has elapsed since the occasion was given for the signification of their desire that it should be published. —It is in deference to their judgment and with the earnest wish that in its effects, it may not wholly falsify their favorable anticipations, that he now complies with that desire,
Quebec, Decr. 1832.

O Lord JESU CHRIST, who at thy first coming didst send thy Messenger to prepare thy way before Thee ; Grant that the MINISTERS and STEWARDS OF THY MYSTERIES may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that, at thy second coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.—*Collect for the third Sunday in Advent.*



SERMON.

1. Cor. iv. 1, 2. Let a man so account of us as of the Ministers of Christ and Stewards of the mysteries of God :—Moreover it is required in Stewards that a man be found faithful.

THIS is a text which it is very obvious to select and very simple to apply in treating of the subjects which will properly engage our attention upon an occasion like the present. I have not been desirous of travelling out of my way for the sake of avoiding what is plain and common, nor ambitious of attracting notice either by the adduction of any unexpected passage, or the ingenious use of any which is more familiar to the mind.

The word of God at large, ought, indeed, to be familiar to our minds. But in the whole compass of that word, we

can hardly find a passage comprehended within the same limits, which sets before us in a more direct manner the nature of our vocation, and the character, which, in the discharge of it, we ought to exhibit.

We are the **MINISTERS** of **CHRIST** :—We are the **STEWARDS** of the **MYSTERIES** of **GOD** :—Ye see your calling brethren, (if I may vary the original application of these words :) Frail “*earthen vessels*” that we are in ourselves, we are charged with the everlasting treasures of salvation, we are the depositaries and dispensers of “*the unsearchable riches of Christ.*”—And it is required of us, that in the execution of this awful and exalted trust, we be found faithful before God.—Who that is truly awakened to consider its nature and responsibility, can fail to tremble at the contemplation of such a charge ?—Who can be bold to say that he is that Steward at once faithful and wise, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find giving to his servants their meat in due season ? Merciful God !—if each individual christian is warned to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, what is the task of those who are appointed to watch for the souls of *others*, as they that *must give account* !—Grant to us, O gracious Father, a deep, an adequate impression of the office with which we are invested, and sustain us by the constant remembrance that our sufficiency is of Thee ; that if we are faithful it is because, as the Apostle speaks of himself, we *receive mercy* to be faithful. Shed down upon us thy Holy Spirit of glory and of grace, that this day our hearts may be moved and our faithfulness increased, in the cause whose interests we are sworn to maintain.

“*O Timothy,*” says our Apostle, in that affectionate strain of personal interest, which, in more than one of his **Epistles**, gives additional life to instructions designed for all succeeding ages :—“*O Timothy,* keep that which is committed to

thy trust."—To *us* also these words are spoken : to all who are called to be Ministers of Christ, and required, as Stewards, to be found faithful in their charge.

In descending from this general view to particulars, the first point which I propose to notice, is *faithfulness in doctrine*.

If we examine those instructions of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, which, as we have just had occasion to observe in a more extensive sense of his writings, are designed for ourselves,—we shall find that this is a subject of deep anxiety with the Apostle, on behalf of his fellow-labourers in the Gospel, and a point in which we ought to exercise unceasing watchfulness over ourselves, and constant prayer to the Father of lights.—Many are the influences which may warp the judgment—various are the lurking interests of the deceitful heart which may operate unfavourably upon our plain and simple fidelity in delivering our Message to fallen man, and dispensing their bread to hungry souls.

"*Take heed unto thyself and to the doctrine :*"—"I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession, that thou *keep* this commandment *without spot, unrebukeable*, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."—"Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus :—that good thing which was committed unto thee, *keep* by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."—"Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing* the word of truth."—"In all things showing thyself a pattern of good work : in *doctrine* showing *uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity*,"—these, as well as many passages of other Epistles in which the Apostle speaks of his own preaching and of the unswerving

sincerity and singleness of heart with which he declared the word of God as it truly was,—may serve to convince us that the pure Faith of the Gospel has not only to contend with the persecution or the profane ridicule of the ungodly, but is liable to be endangered by pernicious accommodations, in the hands of its guardians, and to be wounded in the house of its friends.—The “word of our God,” indeed, shall “stand forever,” but the faith of his professed servants may be like “the grass which withereth and the flower which fadeth.” Its freshness and fragranciness, if we may so express it, are exposed to injury in the murky traffic of the world, and its beauty and brightness are susceptible of soil from the corrupted breath of the crowd. It is through fluctuations of faith and corruptions of doctrine and worship, both in the Jewish and Christian Churches, that the word itself has been preserved intact, and has, in the appointed time, shone out in primitive lustre, “as a light shining in a dark place.” But nature and the world still love not this searching light, and a constant tendency is developed in one shape or other, and in a greater or less degree, to disguise and to obscure it.

CHRIST is “the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”—It is by preaching Christ, therefore,—in the full comprehension of the expression,—Christ in whom “all fulness dwells;” who “washed us from our sins in his blood” and who “is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,”—Christ the means of pardon, the source of illumination, the fountain of grace, the hope of glory,—that we execute our part as instruments to correct the mischiefs of disordered nature. We are in a special sense, “the salt of the earth,” and this is the *savour* which we must retain in order to have any efficacy in remedying the tainted condition of the world. We are commissioned, as the foundation of all, to preach *Christ crucified*.

Wonderful message!—Who, and what is this being, who was “a very scorn of men and the outcast of the people,” who closed a career of shame and suffering by the most shameful and the most suffering of deaths?—I need not direct *your* minds, my brethren, to those multiplied passages of the word of God, in which it is declared *who* and *what* he is—let us only indulge ourselves by resting for a moment upon the contemplation of *one*, in which the Prophet exultingly anticipates the then distant fulfilment of the yearning expectation of those “who looked for redemption in Israel:” Unto us a son is born—unto us a child is given, and the Government shall be upon his shoulder—and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the MIGHTY GOD, the EVERLASTING FATHER, the Prince of Peace:”

Without controversy, then, “great is the mystery of godliness,—*God manifest in the flesh.*”—We are stewards, as the text instructs us, of the *Mysteries* of God.—How then are we to shew ourselves faithful in handling this *prime mystery* of the Gospel?—Is it by simply proposing it as a dogma which must be believed, because it is revealed in the Scriptures, and we can prove the Scriptures to be divine?—Is it by insisting upon it as part of a set of tenets which constitute the system of Religion to which we and our adherents are attached?—No—it cannot be believed so—at least, it cannot to any purpose. Men must be brought to feel their fallen state; made to discern the ruin and the ravages of Sin which reach to themselves;—prompted to flee from the wrath to come which overhangs them, before they can duly enter into the very conception of such doctrines as that He who had glory with his Father before the world was, must for us be made man and for our Salvation crucified. The whole system of the Gospel pre-supposes our separation by nature, from God and Hope.—What the Gospel offers, are

remedies for those who are sick unto death—not bare speculative truths which are propounded to the adoption of the judgment.—Why should Heaven open to let down the Son of God upon the earth, and why should this mission from the throne of glory terminate in the rending agonies of a death of horror,—if there was nothing dreadful in sin, nothing extraordinary in our case, nothing hopeless and dismal in our prospects?—If all this is something *real*—and if we are concerned in it at all,—we are deeply, awfully, concerned in it—it is the “one thing needful,” to which all other concerns are as nothing—and for “the excellency of the knowledge” of which, all other things are to be “counted but as loss.” Let *us* then, to whom is committed “the Ministry of Reconciliation,” and who are to “beseech men in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God,”—let us labour to convince our more unthinking hearers of their need of this salvation—to infuse into them those humbling views of themselves, to awaken within them that discernment of their danger, that solicitude for their perishing souls, which will bid them look to Him who was “lifted up” that he might “draw all men unto him.” Well will they one day thank us, if we can trouble their gay and careless hearts—if we can lower their proud and self-satisfied tone of mind—if we can disturb them in their unreserved abandonment of soul to the world and the good things of this present life—if we can convince them that they have a mortal plague to be healed and can lead them to the physician who is able to save.—Warn them, then, my brethren,—pardon me, if in my earnestness, I overstep my limits and seem for a moment to be assuming the stile of a charge—warn them, “as also ye do,” to *flee from the wrath to come*. Point out to them “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.” It is thus that with the *heart* they will believe unto righteousness and with the mouth

make confession unto Salvation. It is thus that the Gospel will be unto them "good tidings of great joy." It is thus that they will appreciate the gracious language of the Almighty thro' his Prophet, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned."—It is thus that they will appropriate the blessed encouragements which fell from the lips of that Holy One himself—"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for he loved much."—"Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

I do not propose to enlarge upon the other doctrines of the Gospel linked intimately with this, and *presuming* in the same way, our estrangement from God,—which relate to the operations of the Holy Spirit. It is evidently from the same radical corruption of nature which demanded the expiation made upon the cross, that we require the infusion of a new principle and transforming power received from above—without which we cannot even in the first instance receive those things of God which are spiritually discerned, nor learn the love of God, nor do those things which are pleasing in His sight, nor approach to that state in which we bring forth "the *fruits of righteousness* which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God."

I do not say that there can be no exaggerated views upon the different points to which I have been adverting; nor that when we push them to the farthest possible extreme, we are *then* most faithful in preaching. No—That preaching must be the most faithful which is most truly in accordance with the real case and condition of man whatever these may be:—Those doctrines must do the most honor to God which are actually what is revealed in his word,—precisely neither more or less than what stands there declared. It cannot,

I think, be denied that unguarded and unsafe statements are sometimes made from the pulpit,* in the manner of representing the helplessness of man, the corruption of nature, the freedom of redemption and grace: Statements hardly reconcileable with the grand, solemn, prominent and reiterated truths of the Gospel, never to be prejudiced without detriment to the cause itself, never to be evaded without danger to the souls of our hearers, never to be deserted without impeachment of our fidelity, that men are *accountable* beings; on *trial* in the flesh; awaiting a *judgment* according to the *works done in the body*, and taught that, although God does not deny mercy at the eleventh hour, they have small hope of it, if they stand all the day idle, when once the calls of the Gospel have reached them, for that it is to them who *seek* for it by *patient continuance in well doing* that the promise is given of *eternal life*. I wish to speak with diffidence upon points in which there are any shades of disagreement among pious believers; but where a re-action in opinions takes place, men incline towards the opposite of the rejected error, and as the tide of religious sentiment is now turning in the world, there is in some cases, a *positive worldly temptation* to swerve in the very way of which I am speaking.† O let us earnestly take heed that we are under

* And in what a multitude of small publications!

† There is an observation made by Doddridge in a note upon his paraphrase and version of Rev. xix. 8, which is worthy of being remembered and capable of a very extensive application, as it respects the disposition to force Scripture in support of favourite views, whether correct or not in themselves. He points out that the expression rendered *righteousness of the saints* evidently signifies *the righteous acts of the saints*. "And I hope," he says, after some further remarks upon the passage itself, "that christian divines will have the courage to speak with the scripture even though it should be at the expence of their reputation for orthodoxy with some, who profess nevertheless to make scripture their standard."

no earthly influence, no power of party, no charm of names, or desire of pleasing in particular quarters, in the views which we embrace and propagate in Religion; "but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God," let us "speak the things which become sound doctrine." What those things are, we see very plainly in the passage where the words themselves occur: the second and third chapters of the Epistle to Titus, afford a remarkable example,—and it

How many, many things are said in scripture conveying a sentiment or declaration which, if without a particle of variation in the *meaning*, it were uttered by a modern writer, would cause some prevailing prejudices to rise in arms!—In considering the character and effect of their own preaching, it is often necessary that Ministers should carefully separate in their minds the ideas not meant to be confounded but essentially distinct, of *what they really do* and *what they may probably be said or thought* by some of their fellow-creatures to do.—It is very possible, certainly, that these two things may happen to coincide. The preacher may be deficient and he may be charged with that deficiency as he deserves. But it is equally possible that the two things may be absolutely at variance. He may be perfectly faithful and scriptural in his preaching, and yet may be liable to the same charge. The judgment of man is one thing: the reality of the case, another, a different, an independent thing. The concern of the preacher in the case before us, is with the latter. Let him, however, compare Gal. i. 10, with 1. Cor. x. 33, and apply both to his own practice.

It is not intended by any observations made in the course of this sermon to represent the preaching of the truth as it is in Jesus, as a perplexing and bewildering affair. In itself it is simple and plain; and where the heart is rightly impressed, the mind properly stored and prepared, and the judgment duly disciplined, the leading doctrines of the Gospel will always be profitably insisted upon, although with respect to some deeper and more abstruse subjects of enquiry, unfathomable by man (who in this preparatory stage of existence sees but *darkly*, knows but *in part* and prophesies but *in part*;) there are points in which believers will differ, and in which all perhaps will be wrong who endeavour to be very positive and very precise. It is the well-known saying of one of the Reformers that God can reconcile his own contradictions; and whether this be a happy mode of expression or not, it is certain that doctrines and declarations which have at *first sight*, an air of inconsistency with each other, are alike to be pressed in Christian preaching. Of this the text Phil. ii. 12, 13, affords an example. It appears to have been a consideration of this nature which prompted the founder of Methodism to say that "the true Gospel touches the very edge both of Calvinism and Antinomianism, so that nothing but the mighty power of God can prevent our sliding into one or the other." Upon which it is remarked by one of his biographers that "many of his associates and followers fell into both," but that "he always declared himself clearly and strongly against both, though at the expense of some inconsistency when he preached of a sanctification which left the subject liable to sin,* of an assurance which was not assured, and of an imperfect perfection."

* This, however is no contradiction. See ix. Article of Religion.

is in the shape of instruction to Christian ministers respecting their preaching,—of the union which ought to be preserved between doctrinal and *practical* teaching. “Not by works of righteousness which *we have done*, but *according to his mercy* he saved us,” are words constituting the ground of a solemn charge that he would “constantly affirm these things;” and coupled with a notice of the particular necessity thence arising for the maintenance of good works. The same intermixture appears strikingly throughout the passage; and various particular duties which are to be explained and insisted upon, are pointed out.—Again where the same Apostle lays his charge upon Timothy (1. Tim. vi. 2, 3.) *These things teach and exhort*, and proceeds to speak of “*wholesome words* even the words of our Lord *Jesus Christ* and the *doctrine* which is according to *godliness*,”—what are the things there immediately referred to, as subjects of such teaching, and exhortation, and doctrine?—Simply the relative duties of believers in the humblest station of life.—But let us hear Christ himself: “Whosoever shall do,” and not only do but, “*teach* these commandments,” the commandments of the moral law,—“shall be great in the kingdom of Heaven,” or dispensation of the Gospel times. I am persuaded that in these days, we are in danger of becoming deficient, absolutely deficient, in this point. We must keep in view the *whole* of the word of God;—some parts of which are intended as correctives of the abuse which may be made of other parts. We must not preach St. Paul in opposition to St. James,* nor St. James in opposition to St. Paul. It is remarkable indeed how St. Paul, the ardent and constant

* It would be well if some pious men, preparing materials for the pulpit or the press, would carefully read over the second chapter of St. James, remembering that it is *the word spoken by God*; and fall on their knees and pray that they do not contradict it, “*lest haply they be found to fight against God.*”

advocate of free justification thro' unmerited grace,—guards all his Epistles against a perversion as if works were not to be preached, and intersperses with the glorious truths of salvation the plainest and most familiar directions respecting all the common duties of life. Our own reformers are an example to us in this point—for what is confessed on all hands to be more *evangelical* than the Homilies by which our people were once publicly instructed?—yet observe the subjects chosen in part for their instruction—there are thirty three Homilies in all, and among these there is an homily against swearing and perjury, an homily of obedience to Rulers and Magistrates—an homily against whoredom and adultery, an homily against strife and contention—there are homilies of good works and first of fasting—against gluttony and drunkenness—against excess of apparel—of alms'deeds—of the state of matrimony—against idleness—against disobedience and wilful rebellion.*

Much might be here said respecting the wisdom to be exercised in giving milk to babes and strong meat to those who have attained “the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.” But I pass to the next point which it occurs to consider in the faithful discharge of our Stewardship. It is *faithfulness in labour*.

The secret of our service and the surest augury of our success, is that our labour must be a labour of *love*.—Simon Peter, says the Saviour of sinners, to the repentant follower who had denied him, *lovest thou me?*—And as the proper

* A remarkable correspondence may be observed between some of these subjects and those which it is enjoined upon Titus to urge, and they are found in the same conjunction with the most earnest and humbling preaching of the cross of Christ.

Nothing can be more decidedly established than that men may embrace highly spiritual views of religion and yet be in a deceived state with respect to their own dangerous deficiency in plain common practical soundness of life.

consequence of this love, the charge which he subjoins is, *Feed my Sheep*.—Look at what the gospel requires of its labourers—(alas! it is an humbling reference to make, for how deficient are the best of us in that heavenly devotedness which should appear in the service of such a Master!)—but look at what the gospel requires of us and see whether nature is equal to it, without the animating principle of love. Far other indeed, it must be confessed, is our situation from that of our Master and his Apostles. We have, and they are sometimes not small, our anxieties, our difficulties, our trials, our mortifications, our fatigues;—our calls to renounce things dear to flesh and blood—our *constant* call to consecrate our whole man to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.—Yet through the goodness of our God, we enjoy, for the most part, not only the protection of law and security of our persons and property,—but a place of comfort which we can call our home; perhaps an affectionate family-circle in whose bosom we may repose after labour; a certain respect and consideration in the community; sufficiency of maintenance, a share, more or less, of the good things and even the elegancies of life; and regularly established means for the performance of our duties with decency and order.—But *He*,—who gave himself for us,—although “the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests,” had not ‘where to lay his head,’ ‘*he* was esteemed, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted’—and was to the last, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” They also who first preached salvation through his death, were conformed,—and they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name,—to the example of a suffering Lord.—For, not to speak of the manner in which they were often “tortured, not accepting deliverance,”—not to speak of their having “trial of cruel mockings and scourg-

ings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment"—not to speak of their "being stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword,"—put to death in every variety of form which the cruelty of their persecutors could devise—they were, as to their *general condition*, "destitute, afflicted, tormented." Even unto this present hour, says the Apostle, we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling-place—and labour, working with our own hands : being reviled, we bless : being persecuted, we suffer it : being defamed we intreat : we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the off-scouring of all things, unto this day.

O for the spirit among ourselves which would assimilate us to these holy models, if we were to be tried in the same fiery trial !—O for the devotedness of heart, the constancy of love, the energy of Faith, the unrelaxing "respect unto the recompence of reward," which would freely sacrifice all in the cause of Christ ; which would triumphantly surmount the shame of this world, and brave the privations of poverty, the rage of persecution, the most terrific apparatus of death !—I hope,—I trust,—that, with all our deficiencies, there is a share of the same spirit extended to us, and that if trials were to come, we should rise—(yet not we, as the Apostle says of himself, but the grace of God which is in us,) in zeal and fruitfulness, in proportion to the call. What trials *may* come ;—to what kind of proof we may be put,—it is impossible for us to say.—The aspect of the times is pregnant with change ; and change which in the anticipation of friends as well as foes, may shake if not overturn our Ecclesiastical Establishment. No earthly power can overturn the *Church* properly so called.—As a *spiritual society*, neither earth nor hell shall prevail against us. But let us stand prepared in the panoply of God for all the changes and chances of human affairs. Let us feel that if called to it, we

should know "how to be abased as well as how to abound." "Let our loins be girded about and our lights burning; and we ourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord."—Whether any events of a marked character be impending or not, it is *our* business above all men, to be "steadfast, unmoveable always abounding in the work of the Lord."—Let us preserve a posture of watchfulness and prayer. Let us gird on our harness to the battle, and inscribe upon our banner the motto that "no man that warreth entangleth himself in the affairs of this life that he may please him that hath chosen him to be a soldier." "No man also putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* Let us remember the charge given to us by the Chief Shepherd;—"Feed my sheep,"—and the injunction of his inspired Apostle, eminently willing himself "to spend and to be spent,"—"Meditate upon these things : give thyself wholly to them." Let us "be instant in season and out of season," in pressing upon men the things which belong to their peace. Let us—according to the awful vows which are upon us, "*never cease our labour, our care and diligence until we have done all that lieth in us, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to our charge unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among them either for error in religion or for viciousness in life.*" Let us, according to the same vows, "apply ourselves wholly to this one thing, draw all our cares and studies this way, and use public and private monitions and exhortations as well to the *sick* as to the whole within our cures : Let us

* Some of the texts made use of in this sermon may be seen applied in a similar way in an Ordination Sermon published by the Author in 1826, but this circumstance can hardly require an apology.—They are texts which can never be too familiarly or too strikingly placed before the clergy.

in the present continuance of a most awful, altho' abated visitation, heretofore unknown except in remote regions of the East, which has still been travelling westward over the countries of the earth and has fallen with almost unexampled severity among ourselves, be found firm and faithful at our post; and warn those under our charge to hear the rod* and who hath appointed it,—to heed the voice from Heaven which speaks to them in this appalling affliction.—“Be ye ready also,” it solemnly proclaims to us all. And when we shall be enabled to say, *one woe is past*—who knows that there may not be cause to add, *behold there come more woes quickly*.

It is not, indeed, for *us to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power*,—but who knows that this *pestilence*, coupled as it has been already with other signs alike presageful in former instances, of mighty change and desolation,—with wars and rumours of wars, commotions in divers countries,—the powers ordained by Heaven shaken upon their thrones,—distress of nations with perplexity,—men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth,—who knows that thus coupled, it may not be the prelude to other and yet sorer visitations? Who knows that convulsions are not at hand which will shake the earth as it were, to her centre,—pangs perhaps marking the birth of future blessings to mankind, but designed while they last, as a searching test of the constancy of our service, and ordained to “try every man's work of what sort it is?”

* Mic. vi. 9. This rather unusual figure of speech will remind the classical scholar of an expression used by Virgil.

Neque audit currus habenas—Georg. 1. 514.

In all circumstances and under all prospects or situations, our duty is in most respects the same. In the pulpit and out of it,—“beside the bed where parting life is laid,”—or mingling with those engaged in active life—with the old and with the young—in works of charity, and labours of religious zeal—in practising catechetical and establishing Sunday-school instruction—in preparing the lambs of the flock for the important and affecting ordinance of Confirmation—in promoting family-prayer among our people, devout performance of their part in public worship, and improved execution of their psalmody,—in warning the indifferent, comforting the feeble-minded, assisting the preparation of those who would become communicants,—let us see to it that, according to our opportunities, there is nothing neglected, nothing untried, nothing lightly abandoned, nothing imperfectly followed up.—Happy is that Pastor whose charge admits of leisure* to establish himself in familiar relation with all the souls confided to him ; constantly to warn his hearers from house to house, and closely to watch their individual interests.

There remain two subordinate but far from unimportant points in the *faithfulness* of our service, which I propose very briefly to notice.

We must be faithful in cherishing a pervading sense of our responsibility. Never must we lose sight, in any place, in any circumstances, in any company, of our bearing the character of MEN OF GOD. If ever there was a conjuncture where the Ministers of Christ's Religion were called upon to combine the wisdom of the serpent with the

* The utterance of this sentiment was prompted chiefly by a consideration of circumstances attaching to the charge of the Rector in each of the two Cities of this Province, which has for many years been of a nature to preclude any such leisure as that which is here spoken of.

harmlessness of the dove, that conjuncture exists now in the actual position of our Church in this Diocese. If we have been favoured and fostered, we have paid the full penalty which attaches in some cases to such an advantage. I need not advert to the circumstances,—much less will I reflect upon the motives of those who have been agents in producing them,—which, in the midst of ample encouragement to perseverance, and many calls for an increased extent of operations, have caused our legitimate pretensions to be loudly challenged, our rightful patrimony to be openly invaded ; which have made our efficiency to be called in question, our intentions to be misapprehended, our successes to be discredited, our failures to be magnified, our proceedings in all points to be watched, often with far other than favouring eyes. Our friends are sometimes discouraged ; our own adherents expect much from us to sustain the cause. “ Without there have been fightings : within there have been fears.” Let us then, to fulfil our part rightly, revert to the source of our instructions—for it is from the *Word of God* that the *man of God* must be rendered “ perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Let us cause our light so to *shine before men* “ that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven.” Let us “ provide things honest in the sight of all men ;” “ give none occasion to the adversary ;” “ give no offence in any thing, that the Ministry be not blamed.” Let us be “ an example to the believers of our own fold, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.” Let us “ walk in wisdom toward them that are without : giving none offence, neither to the Jew nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God.” Far be it from us, with respect to any party whatever, to exercise a supercilious disregard of what we

may esteem to be their prejudices ; and, while we satisfy our own consciences, to profess indifference how others may talk of us. "Through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish for whom Christ died?" In one sense, indeed, i. e. as it respects the value of the praise or censure of men for its own sake, or as it may flatter or wound our self-love, we must learn to say, like the Apostle in the words following our text, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment." "Through evil report and good report" alike, we must fearlessly go on in the path of duty. But in another view of the subject, we must exercise a tender and solicitous concern for the credit of our Ministry, and endeavour in every possible way, to recommend the Religion which we profess and the Church in whose immediate service we are engaged. I need not adduce those numerous and pointed passages from the writings of St. Paul, capable in many respects of adaptation to local circumstances existing in this country, which relate to abstinence from things indifferent in themselves, if they are susceptible of a hurtful effect upon the minds of others. They are summed up in the generous declaration, "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Lastly—I come now to a subject which falls within my particular province, although it is not, upon the present occasion, an official notice that I take of it—we must be *faithful* in the correct and reverent performance of the ordinary and prescribed duties of our office : An obligation which is indeed closely connected with the tenor of the last preceding observations : for the beautiful forms and offices of the Church, purged as they

are from the gorgeous pageantry of superstition, yet clothed with a reverential solemnity of exterior, and strictly edifying and evangelical in their matter, will often be found to recommend themselves and procure respect, even in quarters where there is a predisposition to condemn them, if her ministers in their *manner* of officiating and the regard which they have to accessory circumstances, preserve the wise spirit in which they were framed. I do not speak only of our performance of *public worship* ;—I maintain that in admitting infants by baptism into the covenant of Christ,—uniting man and woman as one flesh in the Lord with the form of prayer and benediction,—consigning the dead back again to the dust from which they sprang—or administering, *in cases where it is right to do so*, the comfort of the Lord's Supper to the sick and dying,*—our feelings of seriousness and devotion, instead of prompting us to treat externals with contempt, should teach us to prevent all offensive contrast between the sacredness of the occasion and the circumstantial of the performance. Let us avoid, therefore, every appearance of haste, of irreverence, of slovenliness,—every tendency towards the disuse of grave and decent formalities and distinctions in dress or otherwise, which were prescribed by the Master-builders of our Zion ; and not be too ready to construe any incommodious circumstances of a local character as furnishing a dispensation to depart from rule ; nor suffer precedents to creep in which may produce undesirable alteration in the received usages of the Church.

* The Rubric ought not to be lost sight of, which directs that, except in very extraordinary cases afterwards specified, there shall be three persons or two at the least, besides the Minister, to communicate with the sick. If such persons are not to be procured among the friends of the sick, the Minister may often be able to take them with him. But the main point is the actual preparation of the sick man, and his just conception of the grounds upon which he should communicate.

I will take one example only, to come more closely to the point and distinctly to illustrate what I mean: I will suppose a baptism to be performed—one of the infants whom the Redeemer would have folded in his arms,—to be presented to his Minister that it may be marked for his own. Some trifling inconvenience, is alleged, (I would yield the point if it were severe,) as an objection to bringing it to the Church: this sacrament is therefore administered perhaps in a tavern—some vessel is produced which is in daily use for household purposes—the clergyman is in a hurry and he appears without any distinction to mark his office:—I ask whether the associations which attach to the ordinance are likely to be as beneficial to those who may happen to be present, whether their impressions are likely to be as serious, as if the rite were administered within the consecrated walls of the House of God, the water received in a decent font, the clergyman marked to the eye of the beholder, as one who is appointed to minister in holy things?

We ought not therefore to relax in these points farther than we are absolutely compelled by circumstances to do so.—There are other points, indeed, in which we have to grieve that the defective state of our discipline, (which may God in his good time amend!) occasions more serious blemishes in the administration of these services of the Church; as, for example, in the occasional admission of sponsors ill-fitted for their office; and of communicants ill-prepared to approach the table of the Lord. But here also we must do what we can. Whatever is openly scandalous we can certainly prevent. Without speaking however of extreme cases, we can take opportunities in private conversation and in public teaching, of diffusing correct views upon these subjects; and we can give circulation to treatises which are calculated to produce the same effect.

But I must close these observations and receive with you my charge from higher and worthier hands. God grant that I may have been in any degree instrumental to open the way for our benefiting by its delivery! God grant that from the highest to the humblest, we may all be found faithful in our office, and, sensible that when we have done *all* we are unprofitable servants, may look to Christ and his merits for our reward: *Faithful* if, with all our faults, we are, on our side, He will never be wanting on his. *Faithful* is He that hath promised, who also will do it. And what is it that he has promised? Be FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH and I will give thee a Crown of life.

O LORD, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity CLEANSE and DEFEND thy Church; and because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—*Collect for the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.*

. Shortly will be Published by THE SAME AUTHOR, and in a manner uniform with the foregoing Sermon, TWO SERMONS on some *prevailing notions respecting THE MILLENIUM or REIGN OF SAINTS.*